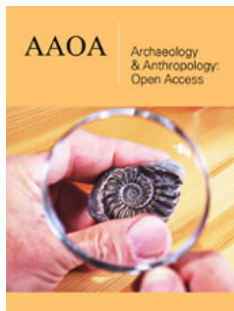


The Differentiation of Early Christianity from Judaism Involved Jews Discrimination (Antisemitism), Unintentionally Distributed Today by the Churches

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Opinion

Nearly two billion Christians believe in Jesus Christ as their God, Son of God and the Holy Spirit. However, the name Jesus does not appear in the New Testament where the leading personality is Yeshua. The computerized word system regards the name Yeshua as a printing mistake despite the numerous volumes of the New Testament read by nearly a third of the world's population. This nomenclatural dilemma clarified during a critical reading of the Four Gospels beginning the New Testament, shedding new light on the historical events in the Holy Land of Israel under Roman occupation nearly 2000 years ago. A few of Yeshua's followers documented his preaching, teaching and fables, as well as discussions with the twelve disciples and other persons. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John compiled them into the Four Gospels, which contain some false comments and misunderstanding of persons observing the activities of those secretly helping Yeshua to reconstruct the prophecy of Isaiah 53 on the intended Messiah.

The name Yeshua means in Hebrew salvation. The Gospel according to Matthew begins the New Testament quoting the genealogy of Yeshua descending from Abraham via King David from whom Messiah shall come. Thereafter Matthew (1:21) says that Mary gave this name to her son "because he will save his people from their sins". "On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise him, he was named Yeshua, the name he had been given before he had been conceived" (Luke 2:21). He grew into a Jewish patriot who travelled throughout the country and preached to follow the Jewish religious rules in the spirit of mutual love and justice, as earlier portrayed by the prophets Amos, Jeremiah and Isaiah. He was concerned with the welfare of individuals and endeavored to ease the suffering of the local population under Roman occupation. He healed the sick and performed miracles, gaining people's gratitude and admiration. Gradually he became convinced that he was gifted with divine qualities to provide help to his people, expressed by his refusal to heal a non-Jewish child saying that "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel" (Matthew 15:24). As a learned and pious person, he had knowledge of the Bible and quoted from the Hebrew text when preaching. He protested against the commercialism of religious services, confronting priests and teachers of the law in religious matters. He emphatically believed in the "God of Israel" and that everyone should obey his commands in their human spirit (Matthew 5:17-20; Mark 12:29-30) rather than glorify rituals. He emphasized to his people (Mark 12:29-31) that the most important biblical commandments besides "Love your neighbour as yourself" is "You shall have no other god to set against me....You Shall not make a carved image for yourself.... You shall not bow down to them or worship them" (Exodus 20: 3-5). This first of ten commandments of the Bible (Old Testament) sanctified by the Christians was later entirely breached, regarding Yeshua (Jesus)

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to be God, presenting his human image in most churches, deeply insulting Yeshua and his legacy.

Strengthening the belief of the Jews in God and his commandments he was addressed by his followers as a scion of King David's family, from whom the Messiah was to come as presented in the very beginning of the New Testament (Matthew 1:1-17). The Four Gospels allude to the impression of Yeshua pertaining to the prophecies of Isaiah 53 and 61 about the intended Messiah (Matthew 7:17; Luke 4:18-19). The miracles he performed while helping his people convinced him that these divine abilities are part of his mission to become the longed for Messiah after fulfilling the requirements presented by the prophet Isaiah (53:3-9), 700 years earlier: "He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.... Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering,... He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; ... By oppression and judgment he was taken away... For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth."

Yeshua decided to follow the prophecy as he informed his disciples at the end of his preparations: "everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. He will be handed over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him and kill him. On the third day he will rise again" (Luke 18: 31-32). Yeshua understood that becoming Messiah requires him to leave the earthly world of the mortals, whereby his soul should rise to the heavenly domain (see Luke 9:51). The killing of the righteous person must be an official procedure by the unjust regime ('Gentiles'). Thereby it will receive wide publicity and affect the people awaiting their intended saviour. This "life transformation", through a temporary death, was through crucifixion. The cross on which he intended to sacrifice himself for the salvation of his people was chosen by him long before his crucifixion as a symbol of self-devotion to his mission and ideology: "anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me" (Matthew 10:38). "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23).

In order to reach the fulfilment of the prophecy the Roman governor should charge Yeshua to death for threatening the security and stability of the regime. The only powerful and influential people criticized by Yeshua in public were the priests and teachers of the law, who supervised religious life. He faithfully believed that the High Priest Caiaphas might successfully charge him with blasphemy that might lead to national unrest, which the Romans would prefer to avoid. Therefore, Yeshua secretly appealed to Caiaphas to have him tried that would result in his death, as revealed in the discussion between Caiaphas and the priests about their required support in Yeshua's death sentence. John (11: 49-52) cites Caiaphas instructing the priests: "you know nothing at all! You do not realize that it is better for you that one man dies for the people than that the whole nation perish... As high priest that year he prophesied that Yeshua would die for the Jewish nation, and not only for that nation, but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them

together and make them one". This authoritative command to the priests to approve the death sentence of Yeshua, who might be the awaited Messiah of the Jewish nation, evidences that Caiaphas did not hate Yeshua or intended to retaliate for his demonstrations against the religious establishment. Actually, Yeshua persuaded the High Priest Caiaphas to endanger his religious status and commit what might be the most serious sins of lying and murder for the sake of Yeshua's divine mission. Though Caiaphas believed that Yeshua is the awaited Messiah, he aggressively accused Yeshua of interfering in the divine process, regarded as a defamation of God (Mark 14: 61-62). "The chief priest and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for the false evidence against Yeshua so that they could put him to death" (Matthew 26: 59). Unfortunately, false accusations were prerequisite to find the innocent and righteous Yeshua guilty, resulting in a death sentence in order to carry out his divine mission.

After quoting Caiaphas demanding from the priests to support the death sentence of Yeshua, John (18:14) briefly summarized the appeal of Caiaphas to the priests without the national reasoning by telling: "Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it would be good if one man died for the people". This short version sounds as if the High Priest insisted to get rid of the 'trouble-maker' Yeshua, who threatens the security of the nation. Christian theologians related to this short version as evidencing the involvement of the Jews in the death of God (deicide), supported by the disciples' suspicion that Judas informed the authorities on Yeshua. The crucifixion that Yeshua intended to carry out would have shocked his disciples, for which he informed them not to worry when he suddenly disappears because he will shortly return. The forecast of Yeshua's resurrection indicates that his death was inevitable for the fulfilment of this mission, which he accepted with deep conviction, and rational planning. He symbolically scheduled his public trial and crucifixion to fall on Passover, the feast of liberation of the people of Israel from Egyptian oppression during which numerous pilgrims to the Temple in Jerusalem would witness his painful sacrifice in becoming their longed-for Messiah and redeem them from Roman oppression. The symbolic date of the crucifixion together with his demand from his followers to carry a small cross, as their devotion to his ideology, were planned long before his death on the cross, rendering divine control on the whole process. Prior to Passover Yeshua and his disciples arrived at Jerusalem "entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves" (Matthew 21:12), publicly exhibiting the alleged conflict between him and the priests, who would soon after the event demand his death. All twelve disciples were faithful to Yeshua and deeply cared for their master. However, only Judas was asked to participate in the clandestine plan indicating that he was the most beloved and trusted by Yeshua (John 13:23-26; 21:20). Being the chosen assistant aroused the jealousy of the other disciples and their strong antagonism towards Judas. They suspected that his meeting with the priests and the people of the law intended to betray Yeshua for money. Their fabricated imaginative story caught the attention of the public and incorporated in the Gospels telling: "Then one of the Twelve – the one called Judas Iscariot – went to the chief priests and asked,

'What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you'? So they counted out for him thirty silver coins" (Matthew 26:14-15). Yeshua ordered Judas to synchronize the cooperation of the relevant parties and schedule the time and location of Yeshua's arrest that should initiate the process of becoming the prophetic Messiah. The Gospels (non-Hebrew versions) record Yeshua informing the disciples at Passover evening (Last Supper) that Judas is going to 'betray' him while telling Judas "what you are about to do, do quickly" (John 13:27), and Judas immediately left the room. Yeshua and the disciples left as well toward Gat Shemanim (Gethsemane), to where Judas arrived with Roman soldiers, officials from the chief priests and Pharisees for the arrest of Yeshua. "Yeshua knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, What is it you want?. Yeshua of Nazareth," they replied. "I am he," Yeshua said" (John 18:4-6). Judas was present, but John does not mention whether he kissed Yeshua as described in the other three Gospels. Judas must have realized that by handing over his beloved master (in his request) to the Romans he actually leads him to death. It seems reasonable that Judas, struggling with pain, embraced and kissed Yeshua in deep agony. Thereafter Judas had an agoraphobic attack and next morning hung himself in great despair (Matthew 27:5). The present historical clarification evidences that the other disciples misinterpreted Judas' secret mission to activate the process of Yeshua becoming the Jewish saviour as if conspiring against Yeshua. The suspicion against Judas enhanced by interpreting the kissing of Yeshua as pointing out the one who should be arrested, although Yeshua yielded himself to the soldiers.

The close relationship between Yeshua and his beloved disciple Judas as recorded by John (13:23-26) contradicts the description in all Four Gospels (non-Hebrew versions) of the Last Supper during which Yeshua accused Judas of going to betray him while urging Judas to carry out his mission as quickly as possible. Greenberg (2007) discussed the erroneous translation of the Greek word *paradidomi* into Latin and English, which in Greek means to hand over, as well as to betray or treachery, and was translated according to the associated text. When the other disciples saw Judas Judas was talking with the priests he was suspected to hand over Yeshua to them motivated by greed (Matthew 26:14-15). In the case of the prophetic arrest of Yeshua *paradidomi* was translated into hand over (Matthew 26:2, 15:Luke 22:6). The Gospel according to Matthew (17: 22-23) cites Yeshua informing his disciples in the Galilee about what will soon happen to him: "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised to life". The same information was given by Yeshua to his disciples on the way to Jerusalem saying that "As you know, Passover is two days away – and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified" (Matt 26:1). John described the same event: "It was before the Passover Feast. Yeshua knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father" (John 13:1), thus confirming that Yeshua's death was inevitable for becoming Messiah, and the word betrayal is completely erroneous.

This biased translations from Greek into Latin and English raised the question of the original language of the early records comprising the New Testament. Yeshua preached to his

countrymen in their daily Hebrew language, in which the scripts of the Old Testament cited by him were written, studied and read in the synagogues as Yeshua did on the Sabbath in Nazareth (Luke 4:16-17). Their Hebrew language appears in the scrolls from that time found in Qumran at the Dead Sea. The records of Yeshua's preaching and teaching, as well as his activities have been compiled in Hebrew during the second half of the first century AD, being intended for Jews in the land of Israel. The Hebrew language of the first text includes the Jewish name of the sacred Yeshua meaning in Hebrew salvation. It appears throughout the Four Gospels and even in the later compiled books of the New Testament, in contrast to other Hebrew names that changed into Greek-sounding one. The prophecy of Isaiah 53 described the person who will become Messiah. The ruling authorities must sentence Yeshua to death, for which he needed the support of the Jewish high officials. He informed his disciples: "Everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. He will be handed over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him and kill him" (Luke 18: 31-33). Though he had to involve the High Priest and other Jewish officials in fulfilling his mission, he pointed out that gentiles (Romans) will kill him, as was actualized.

After the arrest on Passover evening (Thursday) he was transferred to the house of the high priest for interrogation. Early on Friday Yeshua stood before the Roman governor Pilatus for an official trial. After long debates between the governor and the priests who accused Yeshua of blasphemy, Pilate approved their demand for a death sentence. Soldiers led Yeshua to an unbuilt site in the centre of the city consisting of underground tombs from the First Temple Period. It was known as the place of the Skull, in Aramaic, Golgotha (John 19: 17), probably referring to a skull found in a tomb. This site was supposed to provide his temporary grave, which is today the location of the church of the Holy Sepulchre. After several hours the Roman soldiers assumed that Yeshua died and; "one of the soldiers pierced Yeshua's side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water" (John 19:34), finally killing Yeshua. According to the detailed planning and precise execution of Isaiah's prophecy, there is no doubt that Yeshua would not have jeopardized the whole mission by neglecting the last phase of the prophecy of burial with the rich. Yeshua faithfully trusted Caiaphas that he will hide the body in his family tomb where no one would look for it, and detain the body for three days until he shall rise again as Yeshua promised his disciples (Luke 18: 33). One of Yeshua's followers, the distinguished Joseph of Arimathea, knew of required burial with the rich. He appealed to the Roman governor Pilate to receive the body of Yeshua for burial in his new tomb close by because Shabbath (Saturday) was approaching (Matthew 27: 57-58). This tomb cut into the rock exposed in a garden outside the city wall not far from the crucifixion site. Pilate approved the request and after cleaning the body and treated according to religious laws it was placed in the new tomb in order to be transferred on Sunday to Yeshua's family for final burial. Caiaphas' commitment to hide Yeshua's body in his opulent family tomb denotes that the body of Yeshua was of utmost importance to Caiaphas because he sincerely cared for the successful completion of Yeshua's noble mission. However, in case of a failure the disappearance of the body would be accepted by

the public as Yeshua's resurrection and relieve Caiaphas and the priests from being accused of lying and murdering an innocent person. The painful death of Yeshua as a human being shock their deep conviction that Yeshua might become Messiah. The priests probably wondered whether Caiaphas misled them to support the death sentence, fearing retaliation of the people for losing the hope of salvation promised by Yeshua. They decided to enhance the effect when the temporary burial site would be found empty, and preserve Yeshua's promised resurrection and divinity, whether genuine or false. Caiaphas and the priests immediately asked Pilate for soldiers to guard and seal the tomb, supporting their request with the possibility that the disciples might steal the body and tell the people that Yeshua rose from the dead (Matthew 27: 62-66), which Pilate approved. The disappearance of Yeshua's body noticed on Sunday Morning corroborated the proof that Yeshua became Messiah, relieving the conscience of the priests. However, the promised redemption from Roman oppression did not eased. The disappointed public lost interest in Yeshua and in the preaching by his followers to keep the religious commandments for a better future. Some of Yeshua's keen followers envisioned his instruction "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matthew 28: 19). It intended to spread Yeshua's legacy among the Jews communities

in the Mediterranean countries. Their mission benefited from the translation of Yeshua's records into Greek, spoken over the Roman Empire helping to gain the attention of the Pagan people to the new belief, for which the apostles abolished Jewish religious duties and restrictions cherished by Yeshua.

The Hebrew meaningful name Yeshua changed to Greek-sounding Jesus. His noble life sacrifice in order to save his nation from Roman oppression turned to the protection and saving of the followers of the new belief. It gained from emphasizing the false comments against Jews in the Four Gospels and the fact that the destruction of their Holy Temple indicated that God abandoned the 'chosen people', leading to the defamation of Jews in general. The Vatican under the leadership of Pope Franciscus should initiate the emendation of the erroneous translation from Greek to Latin of the word 'betray' to 'hand over', being the prime cause for antisemitism. The negative comments against Jewish personalities and authorities helping Yeshua to become Messiah of the Jewish nation (hence Jesus Christ) need to be clarified in churches. An educational campaign should improve Christian-Jewish relationships in the spirit of mutual love, tolerance, forgiveness and peace among all religions and nations as Yeshua demanded from his disciples: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another" (John 13: 34).